



NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

QUALITY 2020 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. Foreword and Introduction	3
2. Transforming the Culture	7
3. Strengthening the Workforce	11
4. Measuring the Improvement	18
5. Raising the Standards	21
6. Integrating the Care	24
7. Action Plan 2016/17	27
 ANNEX	
(A) Organisational Structure	28
(B) Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations	29

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's (NISCC) Annual Quality 2020 Report for 2015/16. This is the third Report produced by the NISCC and sets out the many achievements delivered by the NISCC as it seeks to ensure quality is embedded throughout all aspects of the organisation.

As the regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland, the NISCC is responsible for promoting high quality standards of workforce training and practice.

We have delivered a number of key milestones this year which underpin quality service delivery and standards, most notably following the Minister for Health's announcement to extend the roll out registration to the Domiciliary Care and Day Care workforce, we commenced a programme of engagement with this workforce, their employers, and interested bodies to ensure we support their registration with the NISCC.

Following periods of consultation, we launched the new Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework in June 2015, followed by the launch of the new Standards for Conduct and Practice (which replace the previous Codes of Conduct). The Standards will provide the framework through which we will continue to challenge ourselves as the regulator of the social care workforce to ensure we are delivering our services to the highest quality.

These achievements were delivered at the same time as working together as an organisation to review the way in which we deliver quality. This report details how we supported a number of quality awareness sessions with all staff to hear first-hand how quality could be improved on an individual, team and organisational level. This feedback will be developed into small projects during 2016/17 to make sure we effect real change in quality improvement. In addition, I was delighted that NISCC once more achieved its IIP Bronze standard accreditation which reflects well on the organisation, the staff and managers as a whole. We also participated in the regional HSC staff survey during 2015/16 and while there are many assurances about good practices across the NISCC, there are also some areas where we will want to do better.

The members of my Senior Management Team have strived during the year to ensure quality improvement is embedded in all aspects of NISCC business from its development through to delivery and finally as evidenced in measurable outcomes. All NISCC staff have a role to play in delivering high quality standards of service and this is measured in

the NISCC annual appraisal system which includes the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) of which quality is a core requirement.

We have reshaped our business model and infrastructure to better deliver continuous improvement in our quality standards and have established a Customer Services Team and we are working with our partners to develop improvements to our ICT registration and regulation system (Socrates).

We set out the various ways in which we have delivered quality improvement in our business throughout this Report which are detailed under the following headings –

- Transforming the Culture;
- Strengthening the Workforce;
- Measuring the Improvement;
- Raising the Standards;
- Integrating with Care.

As in previous years' Annual Quality Reports, we have also added an action plan for 2016/17 to help us measure the extent to which we can evolve our business to make real and quantifiable improvements to those for whom we provide a service.

We welcome feedback on this Report and our services generally to help us ensure we are doing the right things in the right way to provide high quality services to all our customers and stakeholders.



COLUM CONWAY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

When Quality 2020 was published by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2011 it set out a ten year strategy with the guiding principle to protect and improve the quality of services delivered in health and social care.

The Strategy identified five strategic goals which are set out in this Report, namely –

- Transforming the Culture;
- Strengthening the Workforce;
- Measuring the Improvement;
- Raising the Standards;
- Integrating with Care.

The extent to which the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) has delivered against each of these themes is detailed throughout this Annual Report.

The NISCC is a non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Health, (DoH). It is the regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland. Its role is to regulate and register social workers, social care workers and those studying for the Degree in Social Work. It also supports professional development across the workforce.

The NISCC's aim is to:

‘Protect the public through improving safeguards for vulnerable people, raising the standards of social care practice and strengthening the professionalism of the workforce’

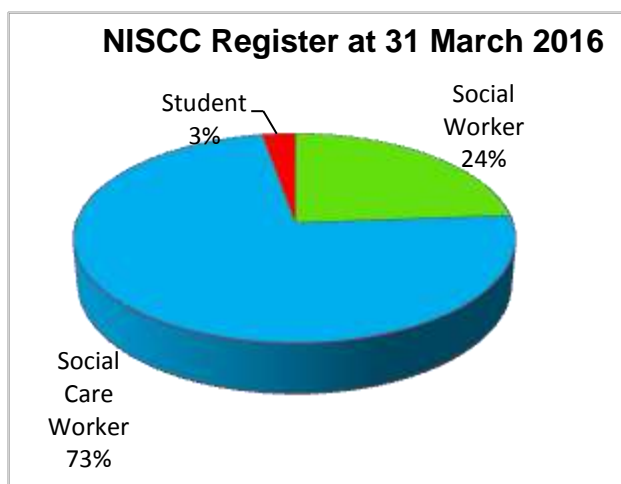
To achieve this the NISCC –

- Sets standards of practice for social care workers and their employers to promote a safe, reliable and competent workforce;
- Registers the social care workforce to assure the public that a social care worker registered with the NISCC will be viewed as safe and competent to practice;
- Regulates social work training to ensure it prepares staff to do the job expected of them;
- Promotes education and training for all social care staff;
- Engages the views of service users, carers, registrants and other stakeholders in developing and delivering NISCC's business.

The NISCC has agreed **three strategic objectives** with the Department of Health which are to –

- Improve the quality of social care and ensure a safe and social care workforce through workforce regulation;
- Ensure that qualifications and standards deliver a skilled and committed Social Care Workforce; and
- Raise awareness and knowledge of the work of the NISCC and ensure its work is informed and influenced by users of social care services, carers, registrants, employers and other stakeholders.

There are over 24,478 social care workers (including Social Workers and those studying for a Degree in Social Work) currently registered with the NISCC (as at 31 March 2016).



In addition the NISCC has been engaged in implementing a programme to roll out registration to the remaining social care workforce (including Domiciliary Care Workers) across Northern Ireland. It is estimated that this will increase the size of the NISCC register to around 35,000 Registrants by March 2017.

The NISCC actively engaged with the new Registrants, Trusts and other employers during 2015/16 as it continues to deliver this extensive programme of registration. This work will continue during 2016/17.

TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE

Q2020 states: “We will make achieving high quality the top priority at all levels in health and social care. We will promote and encourage partnerships between staff, patients, clients and carers to support decision making.”

This means creating a new and dynamic culture that is even more willing to embrace change, innovation and new thinking that can contribute to a safer and more effective service. It will require strong leadership, widespread involvement and partnership-working by everyone.

TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE IN NISCC

The NISCC’s services are delivered primarily to the social care workforce (social workers, social care workers, and those studying for the Degree in Social Work). In addition the NISCC works with and supports a range of partners and stakeholders including employers, the Trusts, universities, the voluntary sector and service users and carers.

The NISCC has strived to ensure quality improvement is at the heart of the business and is not seen as an ‘add on’ or initiative that sits outside what we do and how we operate. For this reason the NISCC’s quality agenda sits across multiple levels of reporting and business operations which is explained below –

Leadership

The NISCC is organised into two Directorates each headed by a Director who is also a member of the NISCC Senior Management Team – the Director of Registration and Corporate Services, and the Director of Regulation and Standards. ***An organisational structure for the NISCC is attached at Annex A.***

The Registration and Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for providing the registration of the social care workforce, and a number of corporate service functions including Database Development, Finance, HR, Procurement, Administration, Committee Management and Communications (the Communications Function also comprises the Customer Services Team and reports directly to the Chief Executive).

The Regulation and Standards Directorate is responsible for the regulation of the social care workforce including investigating complaints against the workforce, and also workforce development including professional development.

The NISCC accounts for its performance against quality standards in monthly Business Performance Reports to the Senior Management Team, and to the NISCC Council in quarterly Business Performance Reports. Both types of reports detail how the NISCC has been delivering its business, identifies areas of concern and enables SMT and/or Council to challenge assurances and make policy decisions.

The NISCC Council is responsible for providing the strategic direction for the NISCC including approving its Corporate and Business Plans in which the NISCC’s commitment

to quality improvement is clearly set out. In 2015/16 the NISCC expanded its public commitment to deliver high quality services by publishing an objective to 'Deliver high quality services in all of our business that reflects the expectations of our service users, carers, registrants, employers and stakeholders'. This much broader and all-encompassing objective arose as a result of reviewing our quality commitments during the previous year (2014/15) and ensuring we continually improve and challenge the extent to which we measure qualitative outcomes. The outcome of this objective is to ensure the services provided by the NISCC demonstrate high quality provision in their development, delivery and impact; and that quality is at the core of the work delivered by the NISCC and is used to measure its impact on its stakeholder groups.

The NISCC Chief Executive and SMT set the quality agenda for the NISCC including ensuring the NISCC has Key Performance Indicators in place that measure not only business volumes, but also quality standards and impact/outcomes. This work evolved during 2015/16 with a range of KPI's and standards being published as part of the NISCC Business Plan for the first time.

Securing Involvement

The NISCC has continued to ensure that it plans, delivers and assesses its business based on feedback, involvement and participation at all levels – including from Registrants, service users and carers, staff and other stakeholders.

Examples of securing involvement in relation to staff during 2015/16 include –

- CEO/SMT meetings with all staff to discuss business matters including the impact on resources/business arising from in-year reductions in the budget;
- CEO/SMT meetings with all staff to congratulate staff's efforts including staff's commitment to promoting online services and delivering team projects, including achieving IIP re-accreditation;
- SMT notifications to staff on reaching particular team goals including reaching the peak thresholds on the number of people being registered with the NISCC;
- Monthly team meetings take place across all teams in the NISCC where all team members can discuss projects which went well and those which have been a challenge;
- All staff were involved in the development of the annual Business Plan and Operational Plan for 2016/17 and in reviewing achievements and challenges in relation to the in-year Plans;
- A number of Quality Awareness Workshops which involved all staff took place during the year – information about these is set out below.
- Registration statistics are shared openly in the office with staff and team members work fluidly between teams, ensuring resources are continually placed where the pressure most demands it.

Examples of securing involvement in relation to Registrants and others during 2015/16 include –

- Feedback from Registrants was sought through surveys and other online means on a regular basis and shared with the NISCC Senior Management Team on a monthly basis;
- Reports on feedback and complaints on NISCC's staff and services were shared with the NISCC Senior Management Team (monthly) and with NISCC Council (quarterly) including an explanation of what has been learnt/improved as a result of the feedback;
- The NISCC actively seeks feedback from participants at each of the events/conferences/information sessions hosted by the NISCC. This feedback informs the delivery and planning of future events.

Quality Awareness Workshops

The NISCC took the initiative to host three quality awareness workshops during the year which included all staff from all of the teams across NISCC. The purpose was to have informal and interactive sessions which would explore how NISCC staff could improve quality awareness delivery – as an individual, as a team member and as an organisation.

The workshops were attended by all staff who were fully engaged in identifying a range of ways in which quality could be improved across each of the functions.

The workshops highlighted some common themes across the business which could be improved to ensure better quality outcomes for Registrants and others.

During 2016/17, the NISCC will be developing up to 5 projects which will involve staff in making quality improvement changes to the business arising out of the feedback from these workshops.

Engagement

The NISCC has a strong track record of engaging with its workforce but also those in terms of engaging its customers and stakeholders, including Registrants, service users and carers. The way in which the NISCC structure its engagement with others is described in the section below.

Partnership Working

The NISCC has four partnerships in place which supports its business, namely –

- Participation Partnership
- Registrants Forum
- Workforce Development Partnership
- Professional in Practice Partnership

Participation Partnership

The NISCC manages its engagement with service users and carers through its Participation Partnership which is chaired by a Member of Council and comprises a number of service users and carers with wide experience of the social care system in Northern Ireland. The Participation Partnership helps challenge the way in which NISCC designs and delivers its business, ensuring it is people focused and impactful.

Registrants Forum

The NISCC Register includes over 24,000 Registrants across Northern Ireland (this is expected to increase to over 30,000 during 2016/17). To co-ordinate engagement with this expansive group, the NISCC supports a Registrants Forum, chaired by a Registrant and comprising representatives from each part of the Register. The Registrants Forum provides a vehicle through which the views of Registrants can be properly and adequately represented.

Workforce Development Partnership

The NISCC supports a Workforce Development Partnership which is chaired by a Member of Council and consists of employers who employ social workers and social care workers across Northern Ireland. Its role is to help develop the skills of the social care workforce in partnership with the NISCC.

Professional in Practice Partnership

The NISCC supports a Professional in Practice Partnership which is chaired by a Council Member and comprises employers and Higher Education Institutions who are key to successfully supporting the delivery of the Professional in Practice framework for social workers. This enables the NISCC to ensure that the arrangements for supporting the professionalism in practice of Social Workers remain fit for purpose and meaningful for those who extend their development using this route.

Each of these Partnerships provides a structured means through which the NISCC can engage successfully and review the quality of the service it provides. During 2015/16 each of these Partnerships have, where relevant, informed the work of the NISCC, provided feedback on draft policies and plans (including the draft NISCC Business Plan for 2016/17), informed the culture of the NISCC (particularly in relation to communications and the language used to engage with the social care workforce, service users and carers), and contributed to a more effective service through the challenge and assurance function they provide.

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE

Q2020 states: “We will provide the right education, training and support to deliver high quality service. We will develop leadership skills at all levels and empower staff to take decisions and make changes.”

The people who work in health and social care (including volunteers and carers) are its greatest asset. It is vital therefore that every effort is made to equip them with the skills and knowledge they will require, building on existing and emerging HR strategies, to deliver the highest quality.

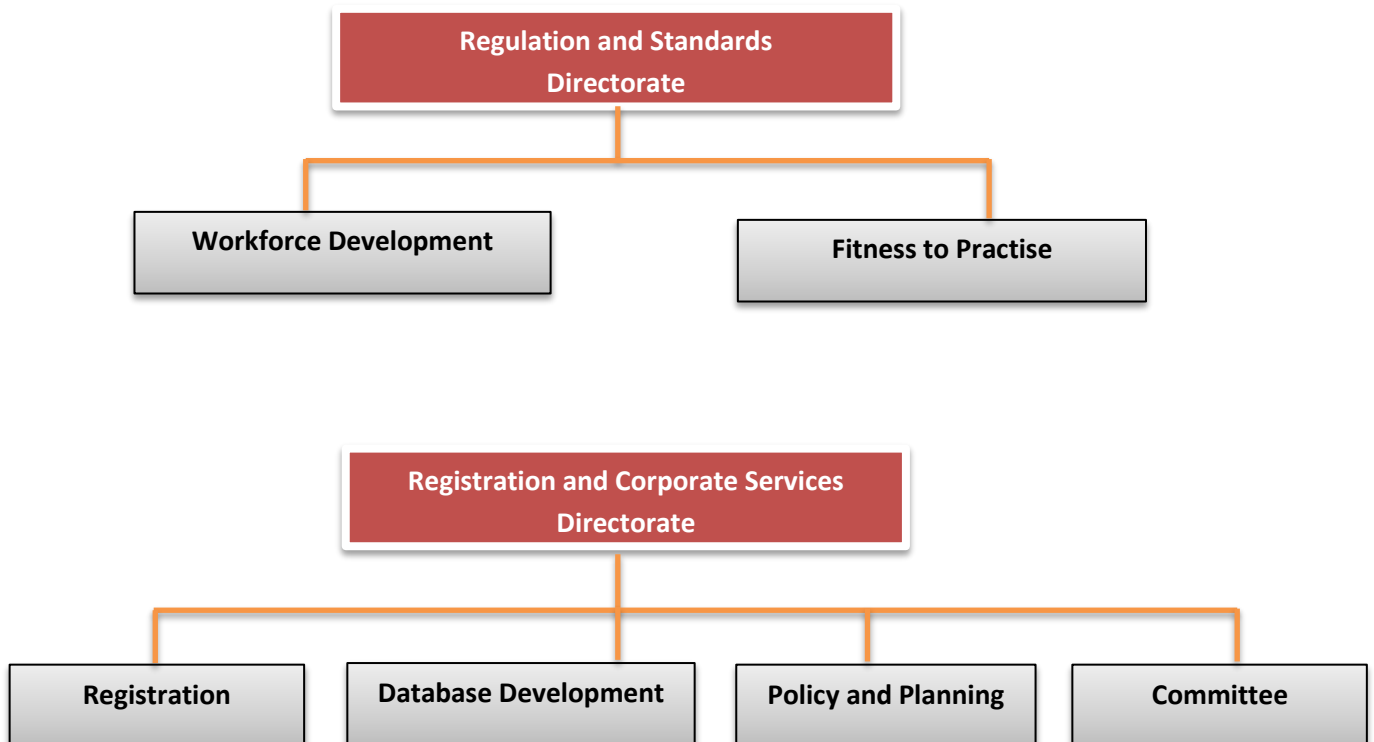
STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE IN NISCC

The NISCC has a staffing complement of 62 staff which comprises –

- Administrative Staff – often providing front line services;
- Managers – including team leaders and heads of function;
- Professional Advisers – professionally qualified social workers;
- Directors – who form part of the NISCC Senior Management Team.

NISCC staff work using a variety of working patterns including fulltime, part-time, job-share and compressed hours. They can also avail of flexi time, special leave including carers leave, career breaks and unpaid leave.

Staff are assigned across two Directorates as explained below –



As mentioned earlier in this Report, the Communications Team, which includes the Customer Services Team, report directly to the Chief Executive, to ensure communications and engagement is at the heart of every aspect of delivering quality services across the NISCC.

Appraising, Learning and Developing

The NISCC promotes a learning culture across all aspects of the organisation, including empowering individuals to take control of their own development and career management. In support of this all staff are required to have a set of SMART¹ objectives in place which reflect an individual's/team's contribution to the NISCC Business Plan, Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators and Standards. Performance against objectives are reviewed twice a year – a mid-year review in October and an end year review in April. Through this process individuals and managers can be assured of their contribution to the organisation's objectives and their learning and development needs can be assessed.

In 2015/16, 98% of staff had an annual performance appraisal and a learning and development plan agreed by end April 2016.

Learning and Development Plans for all staff in the NISCC are reviewed to identify team training needs, essential and developmental needs, and professional learning. This work is carried out by the NISCC Learning and Development Group which is representative of each of the functions within the NISCC. The Learning and Development Group agree a Training Needs Analysis and Learning Programme which is costed and prioritised to take account of equality of opportunity, business need and individual/team development.

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for 2015/16 was signed off by NISCC SMT in June 2015, and the 2016/17 TNA will be tabled for approval by SMT in 2016. The needs identified for the organisation include complaints handling, leadership for middle managers and project management. In addition, all staff will complete the Q2020 Attributes Framework Level 1 e-learning module through the HSC Leadership Centre e-Learning website.

The NISCC implemented a number of initiatives to enhance the learning and development of its staff during 2015/16. This included –

- Outcome base accountability training for managers;
- Extension of induction for new staff to include quality awareness;
- Thematic Information Sessions for all staff on supporting people with Cancer, and also on Autism;
- Quality Awareness Workshops for all staff;
- Information sessions for staff on a number of business functional areas, including the new model of regulation Post Registration Training and Learning;
- Senior Management Team Briefings on a range of issues including updates on key projects, financial planning and new areas of work;

¹ SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound

- Multi-team working on various projects to share and exchange knowledge and information and enhance the overall work experience.

Knowledge and Skills Framework

For the last four years, the NISCC has implemented the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) as part of its annual performance appraisal and learning and development system for all staff. The KSF includes six core dimensions against which all posts were assessed and each member of staff is expected to deliver.

One of the core dimensions is delivering and demonstrating Quality in the Workplace. The NISCC has defined this for staff as

“maintaining high quality in all areas of work and practice, including the important aspects of effective team working.”

Staff are required to demonstrate this throughout the year using the following typical positive indicators of providing a good quality service –

- People are confident in asking for support where necessary and feel well supported;
- People respond positively when colleagues ask for help and support;
- People feel encouraged to report errors and near misses;
- When errors and quality issues occur the focus is on resolving the issue and learning from it;
- There is a no-blame culture;
- Resources are used effectively;
- People adapt to changing priorities and changing quality systems; and
- High quality services are delivered and improving.

The system has worked well and is part of how the NISCC embeds quality throughout all aspects of its business by holding each other to account for individual and team contributions to the overall quality agenda for the NISCC. 98% of staff had an appraisal completed during 2015/16 against this framework.

Investors in People (IIP)

The NISCC has been accredited as an Investors in People (IIP) Employer since 2008, and has had Bronze status accreditation since 2011. It retained its Bronze accreditation during its assessment in 2015/16.



The NISCC has actively used the IIP Framework to inform its people strategies in support of its core business by evaluating key components of the Framework which are relevant to its business. For example, by reviewing effective leadership, delivering and embracing organisational change, putting in place quality and continuous improvement, and demonstrating innovative practice.

By framing the assessment in this way the NISCC is able to have an independent review of these aspects of its business, together with a corresponding action plan from which it can deliver real and meaningful change.

As a result of continuing to deliver its action plan during 2015/16, the NISCC has –

- Implemented a customer experience training programme for all frontline staff. This is being developed further in 2016/17 with complaints handling training for frontline staff, including supporting informal complaints through local resolution.
- Delivered a range of IT training to support staff in making the most of the technology that is available to them, including the use of social media;
- Made a number of changes to its one to one processes between managers and team members, following a review, to ensure these take place in an effective and timely manner, and that they have a positive impact both on individual development and customer service delivery.

The NISCC has also developed an action plan to ensure it delivers on the recommendations arising from the IIP assessment (see below).

Continuous Learning and Improvement Plan

In addition to the NISCC's programme of IIP review, the NISCC actively participates in regular staff survey's which provide a range of information in relation to the working environment and culture for staff, the role played by senior management, learning and development opportunities, staff wellbeing and core requirements (quality, health & safety).

The NISCC took part in the regional HSC staff survey in December 2015. This survey looked at an extensive range of issues including culture, values, attitudes, management, learning and development, health and safety, job satisfaction, and outcomes about doing a 'good job'.

The results of these surveys together with the recommendations arising from the IIP assessments are pulled together into a '**Continuous Improvement Plan**' for all staff for 2016/17 onwards..

This Plan is overseen by the NISCC Learning and Development Group which comprises representatives from each of the teams/functions across the NISCC.

The Group is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Continuous Improvement Plan and reporting feedback to the Senior Management Team.

In 2015/16, the following was delivered in support of the Continuous Improvement Plan –

- E-newsletters developed and emailed out to all staff;

- Learning Programme put in place during 2015/16 in support of the Training Needs Analysis that was produced;
- Health and wellbeing initiatives planned out and promoted, including flu jabs, mental health awareness programmes, promotion of worklife balance initiatives, managing stress programmes and assistance with giving up smoking;
- Knowledge exchange sessions between teams to inform learning about the organisation and how the various team roles support NISCC's overarching objectives and aim.

Good work has been delivered during 2015/16 to make continual progress and this work will continue in 2016/17 as the NISCC looks to respond to the feedback from the 2015/16 staff survey, the 2015/16 IIP Report and the outcomes from the quality awareness sessions with all staff.

Recognising Good Performance

The NISCC appreciates the importance of taking time to recognise and acknowledge good performance whether that is on an individual basis, a team or as an organisation as a whole. NISCC managers are well equipped and skilled on giving direct feedback, in a positive and constructive way, while also acknowledging excellent work that stands out whether as a result of an individual/teams commitment or as a result of the challenge the work presented in the first instance.

This type of feedback manifests itself on a day to day basis, through one to one meetings and through mid-year and end year performance appraisal reviews. At the same time, the Senior Management Team and Council take the time to email and/or meet staff to personally acknowledge the success of a team/teams and of the organisation.

During 2015/16, examples of this include –

- SMT organised lunch sessions for all staff following the NISCC retaining IIP accreditation – Bronze level;
- SMT/Council organised and funded an all staff event in December to acknowledge the hard work of all teams in delivering a wide number of challenging work programmes during the year;
- SMT emails out to staff throughout the year at key points acknowledging work of staff in organising large social work/social care events, managing the restructure of the registration fee model and reviewing the processes, systems and structures in the registration function, and the launch of the online portal.

This all inclusive approach to one to one feedback through to SMT and Council providing feedback and acknowledging good performance is part of the NISCC culture of working collectively towards a common purpose and outcome.

Providing an interactive culture which provides time for staff to connect in this way is also underpinned by the SMT's commitment to supporting the NISCC's Events Committee.

The Events Committee organised a number of functions throughout the year including a staff barbeque where individuals and teams had an opportunity to interact, occasionally with teams whom they might not normally have an opportunity to engage with on a day to day basis.

In addition to these 'staff events', the Events Committee also takes an active role in organising and supporting a number of charities throughout the year.

During 2015/16, the Events Committee organised and supported –

- An awareness session over tea/coffee on supporting cancer awareness;
- Wear it Pink day in support of breast cancer;
- Autism awareness day;
- Team building events for all staff;
- Raising awareness sessions with the voluntary sector;
- Volunteering and outreach in the local community.

Values and Behaviours

The NISCC re-launched its values and behaviours for staff last year (2014/15). The NISCC's Staff Values and Behaviours reflect how all staff will approach and deliver their work, and interact with one another.

The Values and Behaviours were jointly developed by staff and endorsed by both the NISCC Senior Management Team and Council.

The NISCC has been working this year to embed these values and behaviours into all aspects of service delivery and team behaviours.

The aim of the Values and Behaviours is that through their application in the workplace, all staff will ***'provide our stakeholders with a quality service'***.

Senior Management Commitment to Quality

Ensuring a quality agenda and culture exists and can be evidenced throughout the NISCC starts at the top level of the organisation and is led by the senior management structure.

NISCC Staff Values & Behaviours

- Treat each person as an individual;
- Approach our work with a positive attitude;
- Work openly and co-operatively with colleagues and ensure they are treated with respect;
- Establish & maintain trust and confidence in our colleagues;
- Recognise and respect the roles and expertise of workers from other agencies and work in partnership with them;
- Respect and embrace diversity, different cultures and values;
- Have regard for each other's workload and share a proportionate burden;
- Be accountable for our work & remain responsible for any work that we delegate;
- See problems as a challenge and approach them with confidence and optimism;
- Use established processes & procedures to challenge & report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitive behavior and practice;
- Undertake relevant training to maintain & improve our knowledge/skills & contribute to the learning & development of others;

And through these we will provide our stakeholders with a high quality service.

The NISCC Senior Management Team ensure quality and evidence of quality (business reports, feedback reports, evaluation) is part of their regular agenda. At the same time and to cascade this approach the Senior Management Team, put in place a Leadership Team which comprises the SMT but also heads of function and the NISCC Professional Advisers.

Quality, including the Quality Attributes is a regular agenda item and all staff will be required to complete the e-learning module on Q2020 Attributes Framework level 1 during 2016/17.

MEASURING THE IMPROVEMENT

Q2020 states: “We will improve outcome measurement and report on progress for safety effectiveness and the patient/client experience. We will promote the use of accredited improvement techniques and ensure that there is sufficient capacity and capability within the HSC to use them effectively.”

The delivery of continuous improvement lies at the heart of any system that aspires to excellence, particularly in the rapidly changing world of health and social care. In order to confirm that improvement is taking place we will need more reliable and accurate means to measure, value and report on quality improvement and outcomes.

MEASURING THE IMPROVEMENT IN NISCC

The NISCC understands the need to have robust and reliable information to hand to help inform whether it is doing things well – or well enough. To support this the NISCC has a number of reporting and feedback mechanisms in place which include –

- Annual business objectives which are reported to Council/SMT on a quarterly basis;
- Monthly business reporting to SMT;
- Key Performance Indicators and Quality Standards;
- Internal Audit Reviews and compliance reports;
- Data Quality Reports;
- Surveys, reviews and evaluations;
- Customer Feedback Reports;
- Complaints Management and Learning Reports;
- Robust Registration database and reporting.

All of this information does not sit in isolation, and instead is open to challenge, review and compliance assurance. This includes reviews by Internal Audit to provide relevant assurance, and oversight by the NISCC Audit Committee.

Teams also meet on a monthly basis to review their own performance and suggest ways in which work can be streamlined and improved to the direct benefit of those people we provide a service to.

Quality Improvement in Service Delivery

During 2015/16, the NISCC delivered the following –

- Introduction of ‘risk appetite’ including an assessment for all risks being managed across the NISCC. This will add value to the way in which NISCC staff manage and report on risks and ensure the safety and quality of service delivery.

- The development and launch of a new website following feedback from service users, carers and registrants on the accessibility and information available on the original website. Following customer feedback during 2015/16, the website was redeveloped to provide information tailored to stakeholder groups and to support wider use of images and video. The site was also moved to a new platform to offer greater stability and accessibility for users.



- *Average of 14,300 visits/sessions per month*
- *52% viewed the site from a desktop*
- *33% viewed the site using a mobile device*
- *15% viewed the site using a tablet*

- NISCC Customer Services provided a central point of contact for customer queries and requests for assistance. The Customer Service team members underwent a rolling programme of training to build their knowledge of all areas of the NISCC business. This enabled them to assess and resolve a customer's needs. Each month, customers who have contacted the Customer Service Team for assistance are invited to provide feedback on their experience of the service through an online survey.

Customer Service Activity Report

- *14,303 people contacted NISCC Customer Services in 2015/16*
- *53% contacts by telephone & 47% by email*
- *71% of requests for assistance were from registrants*
- *87% of people surveyed stated they found their experience of the Customer Service Team was 'Fair – Excellent'.*
- The NISCC continued to progress its programme of developing mobile learning apps to drive up and support the quality of service in child development services. In 2015/16 this included the third "Understanding Child Development" app which was launched in June 2015. The 0-6 App continues to be the most successful of the three Apps with users now at over 33,000 and downloads across 193 countries. In addition the Domiciliary Care Toolkit App was promoted in September 2015 at the Commissioner for Older People, Northern Ireland (COPNI) "Domiciliary Care Summit – What Needs to Change", and at a range of meetings with sector employers and stakeholders.

Managing Complaints and Feedback

It is important for any organisation to provide a clear mechanism for dispute resolution, particularly if an individual is concerned about the service they have received, how they were treated by a member of staff or the systems/processes which are in place in the NISCC business.

The NISCC encourages its staff that wherever possible, complaints or disputes are managed locally and at source where an immediate resolution can resolve concerns, and reduce the stress or anxiety caused to the individual. The NISCC also recognises that, at times, having a mechanism (through the NISCC Complaints Policy) provides a means through which a complaint can be independently reviewed and investigated. The NISCC's Complaints Policy encourages individuals to raise their complaint with the NISCC's Complaints Officer, and if the individual still remains unsatisfied with their response they may elevate their complaint to the Director of Registration and Corporate Services, and ultimately the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

The purpose of all of this is to ensure that the NISCC listens and responds to concerns, and where necessary puts improvements in place, regardless of whether these are on a small or larger scale.

In support of this work, during 2015/16, the NISCC –

- Provided training to frontline staff on managing complaints/feedback – this is being refreshed in 2016/17 in light of changes being made to the Complaints Policy;
- Provided training for frontline staff on the Customer Service Experience;
- Provided training for frontline staff on Managing Difficult Conversations;
- Social media training for staff on using for business purposes.

RAISING THE STANDARDS

Q2020 states: “We will establish a framework of a clear evidence-based standards and best practice guidance. We will establish dynamic partnerships between service users, commissioners and providers to develop, monitor and review.”

The service requires a coherent framework of robust and meaningful standards against which performance can be assessed. These already exist in some parts, but much more needs to be done, particularly involving service users, carers and families in the development, monitoring and reviewing of standards.

RAISING THE STANDARDS IN NISCC

The NISCC has a sound history of developing and implementing standards in social care. These were evidenced in the NISCC’s Codes of Conduct. Following a public consultation exercise, the new Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers and Social Care Workers were formally launched on 30th September 2015. These replaced the Codes of Conduct. The launch was followed by a number of promotional events across Northern Ireland for registrants and employers, and over 1,000 people attended. All registrants were provided with a copy of the new Standards and a number of on-line resources were developed on the NISCC website to ensure effective promotion throughout the sector.

The Standards came into operation on 1 November 2015 and efforts commenced during 2015/16 to embed these across the sector. This work will continue in the coming year to ensure the Standards are embedded and are at the core of social care practice and delivery.

Standards of Conduct and Practice explain the standards expected of the social care workforce in Northern Ireland. They set out very clearly what is expected in terms of an individual worker’s Conduct i.e. values, attitudes and behaviour as well as standards for their Practice which outline the knowledge and skills required for competent practice.

These represent another important element in the establishment of a system that best provides for the needs of the 250,000 people who use social care services each day. Several events and seminars were held across Northern Ireland to raise awareness of these new Standards. This was complemented by the NISCC conference in March 2016 for social care workers which showcased best practice as a means to achieving better outcomes.

Professional in Practice

The NISCC's Professional in Practice (PiP) was launched on 1 June 2015 at the Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast. It is the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework for registered social workers in Northern Ireland. This framework provides professional credits as recognition for CPD activity and professional certificated awards for learning and development that is assessed against a set of professional standards.



**PROFESSIONAL
in PRACTICE**
Continuous Professional
Development for Social Work

As a follow up to the launch, NISCC delivered over 30 workshops across Northern Ireland to promote PiP to almost 600 participants (including social workers and line managers). The wide range of organisations who took part included the five Trusts, the Education Authority, the Youth Justice Agency, Voluntary sector organisations, and NIGALA.

During 2015/16 there were 2,416 social workers from all sectors actively engaged in undertaking formal learning and development within the PiP framework, through a range of approved programmes or by preparing for assessment on an individual basis.

Post Qualifying Social Work Awards

To recognise the achievements in this area, the 2015/16 Post Qualifying Social Work Awards resulted in the following awards –

<i>2015/16 Post Qualifying Social Work Awards</i>	
NI Consolidation Award in Social Work	83
NI Specialist Award in Social Work	55
NI Leadership and Strategic Award in Social Work	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>144</i>

The presentation of these awards promotes and encourages on-going learning and development in the sector and drives up high quality provision of social work standards.

Regional Strategy for Practice Learning 2010-2015

The NISCC was tasked to take forward the Regional Strategy for Practice Learning to ensure a consistent supply of high quality and relevant Practice Learning Opportunities (PLOs) for social work students. It was completed in 2015 and confirmed outcomes for this year which included:

- Every social work student has had at least one PLO in statutory social work in children's services;
- All social worker students in their final PLO have a social work practitioner on site;
- A Practice Learning Database which was put in place during 2015/16 will enable collation and analysis of data in all aspects of practice learning provision.

Raising the Standards in Council

Since 2013/14, the NISCC Council has carried out an annual Board Self-Assessment to benchmark its performance and governance against best practice and provide assurance that it is conducting its business in accordance with best practice.

NISCC Council carried out its annual self-assessment during 2015/16 to assess to what extent it was efficient and delivering high quality services. As a result of this the Council developed an action plan to raise its standards where it was deemed necessary. This included, for example, -

- Engagement with the Department on succession planning to ensure future vacancies at Council level were filled in a timely manner;
- More structure on Council's engagement with key stakeholders and staff;
- Communication and engagement plans for Council; and
- Formalised arrangements for learning and development for existing and new Council Members.

NISCC Council reviewed progress against their action plan on a quarterly basis including carrying out a number of case studies at strategic sessions to examine in detail particular strategic challenges facing the organisation. As a result of this process, NISCC Council are able to review the extent to which they are raising standards in their own work to the benefit of the organisation and its stakeholders as a whole.

INTEGRATING THE CARE

Q2020 states: “We will develop integrated pathways of care for individuals. We will make better use of multidisciplinary team working and shared opportunities for learning and development in the HSC and with external providers.”

Northern Ireland offers excellent opportunities to provide fully integrated services because of the organisational structure that combines health and social care and the relatively small population that it serves. However, integrated care should cross all sectoral and professional boundaries to benefit patients, clients and families.

INTEGRATING THE CARE IN NISCC

The NISCC is an organisation of the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland. While provided with a specific remit regarding the regulation and registration of the social care workforce, it carries out its functions in close working partnerships with others in the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland. This can span significant Ministerial agenda items such as Transforming Your Care and Quality 2020 to specific and targeted areas of work including Social Care Strategy and raising public awareness.

The NISCC is represented on all relevant groups and committees and is active on contributing to and driving forward the agenda to the benefit of the social care workforce. It also integrates its work at a direct level with employers, Trusts, universities, the voluntary and community sectors, and service users and carers.

During 2015/16 the NISCC continued to achieve this by appointing each of its Professional Advisers with a geographical area across Northern Ireland where the Professional Advisers could develop relationships and understanding on a range of relevant issues and have a designated individual within the NISCC whom they could contact regardless of the subject matter. The Professional Advisers are qualified Social Workers who work closely together and ensure learning from one area of practice can inform another where relevant.

In addition, each of the Professional Advisers continued to support key strategic areas of engagement including the roll out of registration to the remainder of the social care workforce, embedding the Standards of Conduct and Practice, and promoting the Professional in Practice Framework.

Promoting Social Work and Social Care as Regulated Professions

During the year, the NISCC worked with a wide range of stakeholders to raise awareness about workforce regulation and professional standards. The NISCC presented the benefits of workforce regulation in raising care standards at conferences and seminars.

NISCC Ambassadors for Social Work and Careers in Care promoted social work and social care as positive careers choices in schools, colleges and at employment events. During the year, Ambassador Visits and events were promoted on the NISCC website and

shared on NISCC social media sites. Profiles of Ambassadors from Leonard Cheshire were published in the Lurgan Mail. These pieces outlined the range of skills required for social care work and the career opportunities available.

The NISCC worked with a range of stakeholders to raise awareness about workforce regulation and professional standards. NISCC staff presented the benefits of workforce regulation towards raising care standards at conferences and seminars hosted by the United Kingdom Homecare Association, NICON, NIASW, the Social Work Strategy and the Health and Social Care Board.

At the Joint HSC Regulators Assembly Event held in June 2015, NISCC discussed social work and social care regulation with public and political representatives. It was also an opportunity to strengthen links with other HSC regulators and to promote service user and carer involvement in Health and Social Care regulation.

Participation, Engagement and Involvement

The NISCC has been active in involving and engaging carers and those who use social care services in the development of its business in 2001. It has at its core a strategic objective to:

“Raise awareness and knowledge of the work of the NISCC and ensure its work is informed and influenced by users of social care services, carers, registrants, employers and other stakeholders”

The NISCC is also required to publish an Annual Report on how it engages service users and carers throughout the year. The NISCC publishes this Report as part of its overarching Annual Report and Accounts under the heading ‘Personal and Public Involvement’ (PPI).

PPI has been instrumental in how the NISCC has delivered its business since its establishment in 2001, realising the impact and importance of involving those who benefit or use the services being provided, in helping to develop, shape and challenge those services.

To co-ordinate this work the NISCC established a Participation Partnership. The Participation Partnership is made up of service users and carers, and Council Members and is supported by NISCC staff and meets monthly. The Partnership considers a wide range of strategy and policy issues facing the NISCC. The service users and carers, who are the core members of this group, use their contacts, experiences and views to shape and develop how the NISCC designs and delivers its business. The Partnership also challenges and advises the NISCC and all policies/strategies developed by the NISCC must make clear how and to what extent service users and carers have been involved, and ultimately engaged. The Partnership’s founding principles are to Challenge, Influence and Advise.

To ensure the Participation Partnership continually stretch their scope and make a real contribution to outcomes, the Partnership developed a number of 'Principles of Participation' and Quality Standards including –

- ✓ Valuing Leadership
- ✓ Promoting Partnership working
- ✓ Effective Communication
- ✓ Supporting meaningful Involvement
- ✓ Continuous improvement; and
- ✓ Governance

The Participation Partnership's role is to 'Challenge, Influence and Advise' the work of the NISCC. During 2015/16, the Participation Partnership did this by:

- Workshop engagement with the NISCC Workforce Development Team and NISCC Council in relation to the Principles of Participation;
- Development of NISCC's Professional in Practice (a continuous professional development framework for registered social workers in Northern Ireland). Additionally, a member scripted and provided the voice over for an animation used at the launch to highlight the importance of CPD from a service user perspective;
- Inclusion of a member and her daughter in a film produced to promote the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice;
- Design and co-delivery of training for the new SW Ambassador Scheme;
- Development of easy read versions of the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice;
- Contribution to external consultations (draft document Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI, PSA regulation report);
- Contributing to the process for selecting a shortlist of finalists for the Social Work Awards;
- Production of a chapter of a social work text book ("Doing Relationship Based Social Work. A Practical Guide to Building Relationships and Enabling Change") due to be published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers; and
- Held a joint workshop with Council on the Principles of Participation.

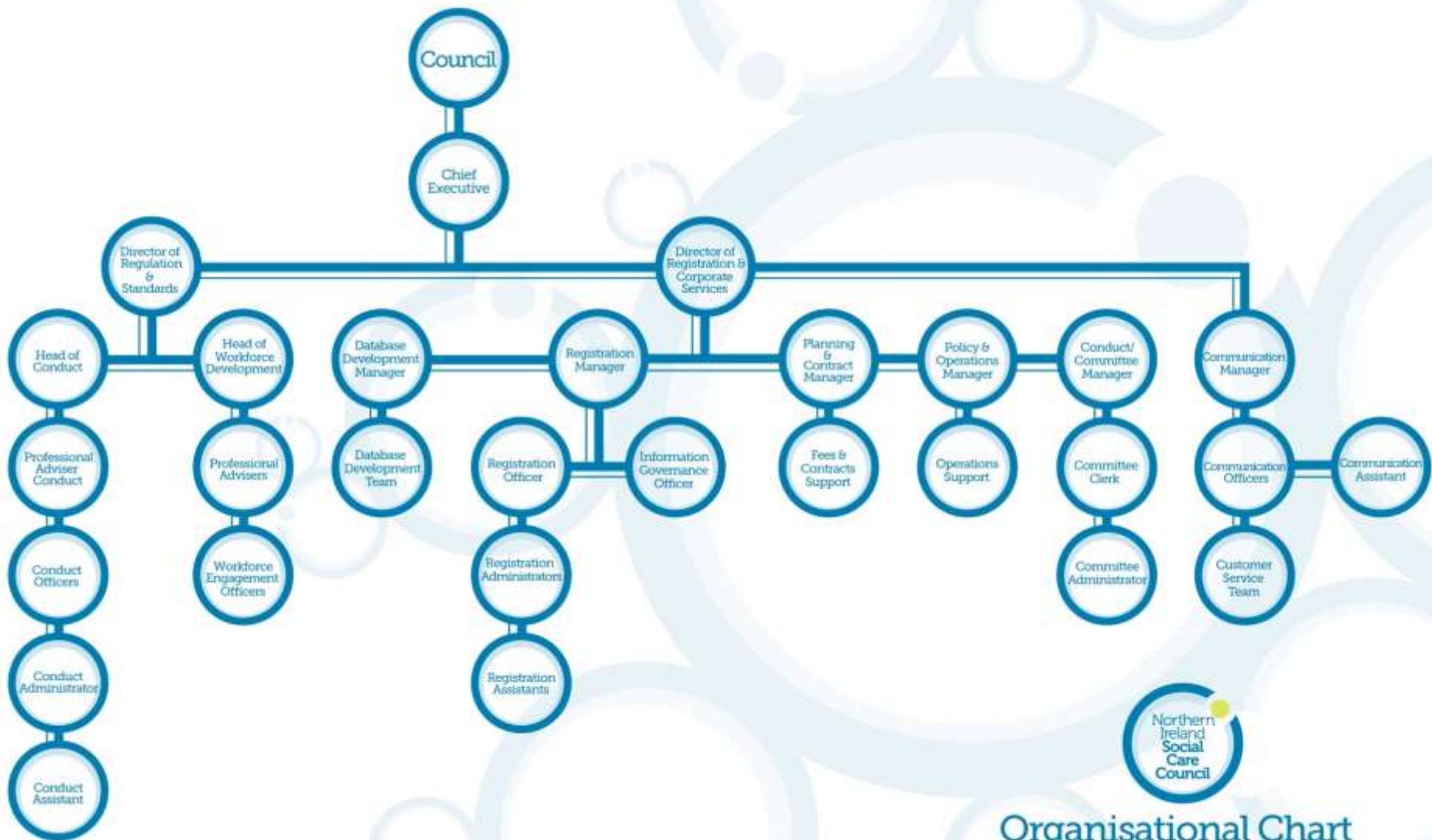
The Director of Registration and Corporate Services supports the broader participation agenda and is the senior representative at NISCC's Senior Management Team (SMT) with responsibility for ensuring that participation forms an effective and regular part of reporting to the SMT and to the Council.

NISCC QUALITY 2020

ACTION PLAN 2016/17

To inform NISCC's continued improvement in relation to embedding quality, demonstrating quality and measuring quality outcomes, the NISCC has identified the following areas for delivering during 2016/17 –

- All staff to complete the HSC Leadership Centre e-learning module on Q2020 Attributes Framework Level 1;
- Launch 5 projects arising from the work on the quality awareness sessions with NISCC staff to improve quality service delivery across the business;
- Finalise and deliver the action plan arising from the staff survey and IIP Report from 2015/16;
- Implement the new Complaints Policy, including reporting on informal complaints managed and dealt with at local level;
- Continue to embed the Standards for Conduct and Practice across Northern Ireland;
- Develop new KPI's and standards across the business aligned to our new Corporate Plan from 2016/17 onwards;
- Develop and deliver a health and wellbeing programme for all staff during 2016/17;
- Keep under continual review and appraisal the NISCC values and behaviours;
- Improve internal communications, including the development of an Intranet;
- Develop a new ICT registration system (Socrates) to improve customer and user experience including data quality and reporting.



Organisational Chart
November 2015

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	-	Continuing Professional Development
DoH	-	Department of Health
HSC	-	Health and Social Care
HR	-	Human Resources
IIP	-	Investors in People
ILM	-	Institute of Leadership and Management
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
KSF	-	Knowledge and Skills Framework
NISCC	-	Northern Ireland Social Care Council
PIP	-	Professional in Practice
PLO's	-	Practice Learning Opportunities
PPI	-	Personal and Public Involvement
SMT	-	Senior Management Team
TNA	-	Training Needs Analysis